

*For Further Reading:*

Hiram D. Ooley, "Repentance of Believers in the Old Testament." An unpublished master's dissertation, Wheaton College, Ill., 1951. An analysis of the factors involved in this Old Testament doctrine and a treatment of some of the more significant individual examples.

Harry A. Ironside, *Except Ye Repent*. New York: American Tract Society, c. 1857. A Biblical and practical study that brings home the absolute need of every Christian to experience personal repentance.

William Douglas Chamberlain, "For Deliverance and Freedom, the Biblical Doctrine of Repentance," *Interpretation*, 4:3 (July, 1950), 271-283. A neo-orthodox survey that questions repentance as an Old Testament doctrine but gives an outline of recent thought on repentance in the Bible as a whole.

## 24. Faith \*

A. PRIMEVAL AND PATRIARCHAL REVELATIONS. Although God laid down no explicit human response as a condition for a man's inheritance under the Edenic testament (Gen. 3:15), the proper heart attitude was still necessary if any given individual was to be reckoned with the seed of the woman rather than with the seed of the serpent. Adam demonstrated his faith in the divine promise (that the woman would produce redemptive offspring) by the very name that he gave to Eve (3:20); Eve confessed her dependence upon God as she then bore her seed (4:1); and Genesis 4:4 notes that God had respect unto Abel, but not unto Cain. The type of offering presented by each of these latter was significant,<sup>1</sup> but the stress of the Genesis context falls upon Cain's improper attitude of spirit (vv. 5,9). Thus Hebrews 11:4 summarizes the situation, saying, "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain . . . and through it he being dead yet speaketh." The general proposition then, that Abel yet speaks, is this, "Without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto Him" (Heb. 11:6).

The patriarch Abraham believed in Yahweh, and He reckoned it to him for righteousness (Gen. 15:6; cf. Rom. 4:18). The Hebrew root of this verb "believe" is *āman*, "to be steady, firm, or trustworthy, trust in."<sup>2</sup> The basic idea is therefore that of "confirming," of causing

\* BIBLE READING: Genesis 15; Habakkuk 2

*Collateral Reading:* Vos, *Biblical Theology*, pp. 96-102.

John H. Raven, *The History of the Religion of Israel*, pp. 459-474.

Norman H. Smith, *Mercy and Sacrifice: a Study of the Book of Hosea* (London: Student Christian Movement Press, 1953), pp. 39-40, 50-69.

<sup>1</sup> See below, topic 27-C.

<sup>2</sup> Ludwig Kohler, *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros*, p. 61. Thus Raven, *The History of the Religion of Israel*, p. 468, well notes, "Faith was the great prophet of faith. Nevertheless it did not begin with him. The beginning of the doctrine of faith is in the story of Abraham," though cf. Abel.

oneself to find support. Vos terms it a "causative-productive";<sup>3</sup> and Warfield, in a similar vein, has stated:

"It is a subjective causative, and expresses the acquisition or exhibition of the firmness, security, reliability, faithfulness, which lies in the root meaning of the verb, in or with respect to its object."<sup>4</sup>

This object, in Scripture's discussion of Abraham's faith, was none other than God Himself. The most generally satisfactory translation, therefore, of *āman* (believe) in Genesis 15:6, and the translation that best brings out this idea of "relying upon," or of "fastening one's confidence upon," is simply this: "Abraham trusted in God."

To such a definition of faith appear the following six corollaries.

1) Faith is a matter of personal commitment to God. As Vos well points out, the development of a man's faith in God does not consist of "assent to the veracity of a statement" followed by an ultimate trust in a Person; because the Person of God transcends human verification. "Back of the belief, the assent, therefore there lies an antecedent trust distinguishable from the subsequent trust."<sup>5</sup> Faith may therefore exhibit a quantitative development, but not a qualitative one. It does not evolve from doubt to trust. A man either has committed himself to the historical God of salvation or he has not.

2) Such faith composes the one preeminent condition for a man's inheriting the blessings of the testament. Faith constitutes the basic commitment from which all other aspects of commitment will follow, even the repentance which, in practical outworkings, precedes it. Abraham's receiving of the testament was thus conditioned by his "faithful heart" (Neh. 9:8). So also today, as 1900 years ago (or over 3000 years ago, in the case of Abraham), the question, "What must I do to be saved?" is answered by the same simple but profound truth, "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (Act 16:31).

3) Faith in the Person, if sincere, will be followed by a faith in (that is, an assent to) His propositional declarations. Abraham therefore committed himself to the truth of the promise that he could receive a seed as numerous as the stars (Gen. 15:5), impossible as this promise seemed at the time (Heb. 11:12). Sarah, one must admit, laughed at first in disbelief at the prospect of a couple, as old as they were, having a child (Gen. 18:13); cf. Abraham's own, similar attitude (17:17). From this hesitancy, then, arose the ironical name given by God to the promised son, *Yish'aq* (Isaac), "he laughs" (17:19). But, subsequently, Sarah went so far as to become guilty of falsehood, as she attempted to repudiate her own skepticism

<sup>3</sup> *Biblical Theology*, p. 98.

<sup>4</sup> *Biblical Doctrines* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1929), p. 408.

<sup>5</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 98.



(18:15). Fundamentally, her acknowledgement of God was genuine; she became strong and consistent in faith, "since she counted Him faithful who had promised" (Heb. 11:11); and she ended by giving a happy turn to this name *Yeshay*: "God hath made me to laugh; every one that heareth will laugh with me" (Gen. 21:6). So today, Christ demands of His own their conformity to His truth, particularly to the propositions of the Bible, to which He Himself was so thoroughly committed. Christ indeed considered faith in the Bible and faith in Himself inseparable: "For if ye believed Moses, ye would believe Me; for he wrote of Me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" (John 5:46, 47). The Pharisees of Jesus' day did not really believe in the Mosaic supernaturalism that they professed, and so they did not accept Christ; but similarly, any man who now questions Scripture, even this same Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, cannot possess a true conformity to the mind of Christ, in which this aspect of supernaturalism bulked so large.

4) Abraham's faith included both the negative renunciation of his own ability, and his positive reliance upon God. Abraham was willing to go so far as to sacrifice his son Isaac when God ordered him to do so. He had faith in Yahweh's ability even to raise Isaac from the dead (Heb. 11:19),<sup>8</sup> as is witnessed by his statement of confidence, at the point where he and his son left the servants, saying: "We will come again to you" (Gen. 22:5).

5) Though qualitatively speaking, Abraham's faith remained constant, as a basic commitment to God, this did not mean that quantitatively speaking he stood without need of more faith. As a man once exclaimed to Christ Himself, "I believe, help Thou mine unbelief!" (Mark 9:24). The matter of Abraham's laughter over the birth of Isaac has already been noted, and just two verses after the supreme description of Abraham's faith comes a questioning on Abraham's part, a seeking of proof from God, that showed his need even then for additional faith (Gen. 15:8).

6) Abraham's faith involved both a subjective and an objective side. As Vos puts it, his faith was an "affirmation of divine omnipotence." It consisted, subjectively of an affirmation, that is, of a state of mind, "the attitude of faith"; but it consisted also of an affirmation that was directed toward the divine object. For anyone can possess faith, in the subjective sense of being sincere; but he may be a sincere communist! Abraham's faith, however, was directed, it involved an entering into God's objective promises, "to incorporate the supernatural."<sup>7</sup>

<sup>8</sup>The next statement, "whence also he received him in a figure," lends further emphasis to the reality of Abraham's faith in such a resurrection. It is not that Isaac exists as a type of Christ's sacrificial death in obedience to the Father, or as a type of His resurrection, which Scripture nowhere suggests. Rather, Isaac himself was the one who died figuratively in the ram and was thus figuratively restored.

<sup>7</sup>Vos, *op. cit.*, pp. 99-100.

In both of these respects, then, Abraham became the "father of the faithful." Subjectively, he establishes the pattern for our attitude of faith (Gal. 3:7; Rom. 4:16); and objectively, he serves as an exemplary recipient both of the God-given righteousness that comes through faith and of a divinely granted heirship to the world (Gal. 3:29; Rom. 4:11, 13). When he was called of God in Ur of the Chaldees,<sup>8</sup> he stepped out in faith, "not knowing whither he went" (Heb. 11:8). His whole life, moreover, demonstrates a commitment, not to material values, for he and his family were "strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (v. 13), but to the spiritual side of life: "But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God (the promise, in summary, of the testament): for He hath prepared for them a city" (v. 16). In the final analysis, the Abrahamic promise was directed only to Christ (Gal. 3:16). He who constituted in Himself alone the ultimate remnant of the seed of Israel.<sup>9</sup> But Christ "took on Him the seed of Abraham . . . that He might make reconciliation for the sins of the people" (Heb. 2:16, 17); "And if ye are Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise" (Gal. 3:29).

Two specialized Hebrew terms appear in Genesis as further descriptions of the faith of the patriarchs. Abraham spoke of this noun *yir'ā*, the "fear" of God (Gen. 20:11). The connotation of this noun *yir'ā* is not one of terror towards God, for this would not be true of those who trust in Him (1 John 4:18), but rather of respect and reverence toward the Heavenly Father. "Fear" is faith, as it submits to His will. The heart of man's response to the testament is therefore to "fear" God (11 Kings 17:35, 36, 38, 39). Scripture reiterates, "Fear [from the verbal root *yārē'*], show faith in, God, and [as necessarily follows in *yir'ā*] keep His commandments; for this is the whole duty of man" (Eccl. 12:13). Jacob then employed a second, related term when he invoked God as the *pidhādā*, the "Fear," of his father Isaac. That is, he conceived of God in terms of the One whom his father revered (Gen. 31:42, 53). Jacob's very citation of Isaac witnesses to the reality and depth of the latter's religion,<sup>10</sup> to the impression that a father's godly fear has upon his son, and to the lasting effect of one's paternal faith.<sup>11</sup> This faith then continued to characterize both Jacob and his son Joseph, down to their very deaths in Egypt. For

<sup>8</sup>See above, p. 224. Vos indeed maintains that Abraham continued to remain ignorant of his destination, after his call in Haran as well, claiming that God's designation of Canaan in Gen. 12:7 "came as a surprise to him," *ibid.*, p. 97. Before reaching Haran, however, Abraham and the rest of the party under Terah knew that their destination was to be Canaan (Gen. 11:31).

<sup>9</sup>See above, pp. 187, 264, 265.

<sup>10</sup>A point needed to qualify Vos' criticism of Isaac's, as a passive period in re-

<sup>11</sup>Observations by Professor John Murray in classes at Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia.



their trust in God's word, as it had first been revealed to Abraham, was evidenced by their commands to be buried in the Promised Land of Canaan, even though it had yet to be possessed (47:29; 50:2, 25; cf. Heb. 11:22).

B. MOSAIC REVELATIONS. Sinai, despite its external regulations, was basically a matter of heart-felt faith. The testamental condition was indeed stated in the following legalistic phraseology: "If ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep my testament, then . . ." (Ex. 19:5).

But why must Israel obey the Ten Commandments? . . . The reason is given in the verse which precedes the Commandments: "I am the Lord thy God which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage" (Exodus 20:2). The essence of the faith, therefore, is . . . that Jehovah was and is their Savior, and He has saved them, saves them now in order that they may do His Will . . . being truly thankful to a Husband-God who has never been anything else than faithful from the beginning.<sup>12</sup>

So Moses' ministry was one that throughout its course placed the emphasis upon faith (cf. Heb. 11:24-29). The people believed Moses at the first (Ex. 4:31); and, following their deliverance at the Red Sea, "the people feared Yahweh: and they believed in Yahweh, and his servant Moses" (14:31). God's statement of this free, prior redemption from Egypt served as His introduction to the actual words of the testament (19:4); and the people, in correspondingly appropriate faith, accepted the testament before ever they knew its detailed, external conditions (v. 8). The legalities do indeed follow, but only as an application and as a demonstration of the fundamental requirement of grateful faith.<sup>13</sup> It cannot be emphasized too strongly that Exodus 19 (faith and salvation) precedes Exodus 20 (the fruitage of moral works).<sup>14</sup>

A fundamental failure of Scofield dispensationalism is its shortsighted inability to appreciate the Sinaitic law as a part of the one gracious testament, which had been revealed immediately after man's fall. This same grace continues and develops progressively throughout the rest of human history and the rest of the Bible. The New Testament makes it clear that the testament (to Abraham), "confirmed beforehand by God, the law, which came [at least the well-known]<sup>15</sup> four hundred and thirty years after, doth not disannul, so as to make the promise of none effect" (Gal. 3:17). Yet the notes of the Scofield Reference Bible assert,

<sup>12</sup>Snaith, *Mercy and Sacrifice: a Study in the Book of Hosea* (London: S.C.M. Press, 1933), pp. 54-55, 57.

<sup>13</sup>See above, p. 91, and cf. Raven, *op. cit.*, pp. 469-470, and John Murray, *The Covenant of Grace*.

<sup>14</sup>Cf. Payne, *An Outline of Hebrew History*, p. 35, and John Murray, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

"The Dispensation of Promise ended when Israel rashly accepted the law (Ex. 19:8). Grace had prepared a deliverer (Moses), provided a sacrifice for the guilty, and by divine power brought them out of bondage (Ex. 19:4); but at Sinai they exchanged grace for law."<sup>16</sup>

As an initial criticism, however, one must object that since the testament is monergistically devised and imposed by God, such an assertion would suggest that God had in some way tricked Israel into accepting what was not really in their best interests. The context, on the contrary, makes it clear that there was nothing whatsoever "rash" about Israel's claiming heirship under the Sinaitic testament. There was the automatic response of grateful hearts, trusting God and rejoicing in His gracious adoption. Sweepingly to dismiss the whole of the Sinaitic commandments as "a ministry of condemnation and of death,"<sup>17</sup> is grossly to misapprehend the Old Testament. The law was by no means an impossible burden (Deut. 30:11-14). Israel loved the law (Ps. 119:167), which it lauds as "sweeter than honey" (19:10). After all, its statutes were their highway, albeit anticipatory, to heaven itself.

The fundamental requirement of the law was faith, belief in God (Deut. 1:32; 9:23). Moses explained: "And now, Israel, what doth Yahweh thy God require of thee, but to fear [have faith in] Yahweh thy God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, and to serve Yahweh thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul" (Deut. 10:12). Scofield, however, insists,

"As a dispensation, grace begins with the death and resurrection of Christ. The point of testing is no longer legal obedience as the condition of salvation, but acceptance or rejection of Christ, with good works as a fruit of salvation."<sup>18</sup>

The very existence, however, of Moses in heaven (cf. Matt. 17:3), is proof enough that good works were not "the condition of [his] salvation." Rather, as the verse previously quoted demonstrates, the essential matter both for him and for us is the fear and love of God. Then, that Israel should "walk in all His ways" became the natural expression of their love. Obedience constituted just as much a fruit of salvation for them as it does now for us. Compare the wording of Deuteronomy 6:2: "Fear Yahweh [the basic point], to keep all His statutes [the result]."

Christ declared that the essence of the law is this: "Thou shalt

<sup>16</sup>p. 20; contrast Murray's definition of obedience as simply reciprocated faithfulness, *op. cit.*, pp. 18-20.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 95. For the true significance of II Cor. 3:7-9, see below, topic 25, period 3. Note also in this regard John Murray's excellent distinction of the three New Testament usages of the phrase "under law." *Principles of Conduct*, pp. 182-200, 293-65, and especially p. 190.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 1115.



love Yahweh thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might" (Deut. 6:5; cf. Mark 12:28-30). Thus the opening commandments of the "ten words" lay down the attitudes of mind toward God that the Lord expects of His own; for example, Command III, that men should show reverence for the name of Yahweh (— the requirements of God);<sup>18</sup> and only subsequently appear the moral stressed that the law's primary requirement was that of a circumcision of the heart (Deut. 10:16), of a seeking of God with one's whole being (4:29). It was this wholehearted commitment to God in faith that distinguished the heroes of the wilderness period (Num. 14:24; 32:12). The entire nation of Israel, in fact, found deliverance when those who were perishing looked in faith on the brazen serpent—no works involved! (Num. 21:9; cf. John 3:14).

Appeals, moreover, on the basis of the gracious Abrahamic testament, with its requirements of faith and of a humble and yielded heart, continued to be made by those who were living chronologically under the Sinaitic testament (Ex. 32:12-13; Lev. 26:40-42; Deut. 4:29-31). For the Sinaitic is identical with all other Biblical testaments in its basic features of faith and obedience.<sup>19</sup> Thus the New Testament affirms that the legalism of the Pharisees was actually a perversion of the faith that the law really taught (Matt. 23:23). God's righteousness by faith, not by works (Rom. 9:32).

C. REVELATIONS CENTERING IN DAVID. The time of Israel's consolidation in Canaan was marked by a general departure from faith in God (Judg. 21:25), but the Lord continued to raise up great leaders of faith (cf. Heb. 11:30-32). At the very beginning of the period, for example, Joshua had recognized that Israel might readily be led astray into a reliance upon the gods of Canaan; but he made crystal clear the stand that he personally had taken (and which he expected the nation to take) — "As for me and my house, we will serve Yahweh" (Josh. 24:15).

David's early hardships taught him the basic necessity of faith. When in flight from Saul and having barely escaped with his life from the hands of the Philistines (1 Sam. 21:13), he was led to compose such lines as these:

"This poor man cried, and Yahweh heard him,  
And saved him out of all his troubles.  
Oh taste and see that Yahweh is good:

Blessed is the man that taketh refuge in Him!" (Ps. 34:6, 8).

<sup>18</sup>See above, p. 144.

<sup>19</sup>See above, topic 6-E.

When even his few followers threatened to turn against him, we read that David "strengthened himself in Yahweh his God" (1 Sam. 30:6). Later on, when betrayed by his own sinful nature, he revealed that his confidence lay in a broken and a contrite heart, one which was fully trusting in the mercy of God (51:17). His psalms abound with sentiments such as "I love Thee" (18:1); "Hope thou in God" (42:5); "Wait thou upon God" (62:5); "He only is my rock" (62:6); and compare Asaph's meditation, "Whom have I but Thee?" (73:25). David stands out as the greatest Biblical representative of personal faith in God. His famous words in Psalm 37 summarize indeed man's whole attitude of response under the testament:

"Commit thy way unto Yahweh,

Trust also in Him, and He will bring it to pass.

Rest in Yahweh, and wait patiently for Him" (vv. 5, 7; cf. 112:7; 131:2).

In the next period, Solomon's best known proverb (3:5, 6) teaches this same principle of faith in God rather than of reliance upon one's own understanding (cf. Prov. 16:3). Solomon emphasized that the great need of Israel, and of all nations, is humbly to seek God's face (II Chron. 7:14); and, the positive conclusion of his book of Ecclesiastes states, as previously noted, that man's chief duty is the fear of God (12:13). Eliphaz, whose words seem to have been first revealed to Israel at about this time, indeed misjudged Job personally; but his general approach was a sound one: "Is not thy fear of God thy confidence?" (4:6); and again, "If thou return to the Almighty thou shalt be built up" (22:23). That "faith is the victory," even against overwhelming odds, was then borne out in experience by the deeds of the pious among Judah's ninth century kings. Specifically, Aza advanced against his Cushite foes with the resolute prayer, "In Thy name we go" (II Chron. 14:11); and Jehoshaphat experienced his greatest success, following upon his ringing charge, "Believe in Yahweh your God, so shall ye be established" (20:20). Equally victorious, though not outwardly so, was Zechariah the priest, receiving a martyr's crown at the hands of Joash, as he remained faithful unto death (24:20).

D. PROPHETIC REVELATIONS. The prophets reacted against an undue externalism in their people's religion and stressed the need for their return to simple but heartfelt faith in Yahweh. Snath puts it this way, in respect to the earliest eighth century prophet to Israel: "Hosea's contribution is that the relation between God and His people Israel is personal."<sup>20</sup> God loves man; and, in respect to the corresponding personal response,

<sup>20</sup>Marx, p. 39. But when he qualifies this relationship of personal faith by claiming that Hosea is "beyond question the first prophet of a new tradition," he demonstrates an almost total disbelief in the historicity of Abraham, David, and others of those mentioned above, as they are described in Scripture.



"... on man's side it consists of dutiful love and humble trust... To love God with all that a man is and has, is more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices, more indeed than anything else."<sup>21</sup>

Micah then composed what has been called the greatest verse in the Bible, second only to John 3:16, as he described the response of man's faith in terms of fear and humility: "He hath showed thee, oh man, what is good; and what doth Yahweh require of thee, but to do justly, and to love *hesedh* [loyalty to the conditions of the testament], and to walk humbly with thy God?" (6:8). Joel spoke of "turning to Yahweh" (2:13); and Amos, of "seeking" Him (5:4; cf. Zeph. 2:3). Hosea is further distinguished by a peculiarly meaningful use of the verb *yādha*, to "know," and its derivatives. He exclaims, for example, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee" (Hos. 4:6). Or again, "Let us know, let us follow on to know Yahweh" (6:3). In reference to these passages, Snaitch comments,

"We are accustomed to follow the Greek tradition and to interpret knowledge as being mainly intellectual. The Hebrews did not do this... Hosea here envisages a growing personal knowledge of God."<sup>22</sup>

It is true that Snaitch's antithesis between faith and intellect is an unhappy one; and his thought is doubtless conditioned by his neo-orthodox limitation of revelation to an existential, non-propositional knowledge of God.<sup>23</sup> Hosea himself makes it clear that faith is impossible apart from one's rational assent to propositions (cf. the stress upon words in Hos. 14:2).<sup>24</sup> This axiomatic truth, the Hebrew Scriptures demonstrate throughout;<sup>25</sup> for faith is by definition a mental activity. But Hosea, in these verses about "knowledge," is demanding a consistent rationalism, knowledge that arises from God's special revelation, that is validated by man's personal encounter with the God who is trusted, that is truly believed with the mind, and that produces the appropriate response in a man's life.<sup>26</sup> There is nothing more vain than knowledge that is falsely professed but not really believed. So Hosea insists, "It is time to seek Yahweh" (10:12); for and it, is the heart of religion.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., pp. 40, 69.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 62.

<sup>23</sup>See above, pp. 16, 33, 34.

<sup>24</sup>See Gordon H. Clark's incisive analysis, "Faith and Reason," *Christianity Today*, 1:10, 11 (Feb. 18 & March 4, 1957).

<sup>25</sup>See above, pp. 71, 72.

<sup>26</sup>See above, pp. 71, 72. Jacob thus speaks of the three-fold aspect of faith in the Old Testament: faith as knowledge, as trust, and as active obedience, *Theology of the Old Testament*, p. 174.

With this emphasis upon faith, Isaiah's prophecies particularly abound.<sup>27</sup> His word to the vacillating Ahaz was, "If you will not believe [*āman* in the causative: consider God as steady or trustworthy], surely ye shall not be established [*āman* in the passive, be steadied, be able to last out]" (Isa. 7:9). Compare also the following verses: Isaiah 8:17, "I will wait for Yahweh, that hideth His face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for Him"; 26:3, 4, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed [*sāmakh*, supported] on Thee; because he trusteth in thee: trust ye in Yahweh for ever"; 28:16, "Behold I lay in Zion a precious corner-stone [Messiah]: he that believeth shall not be in haste [or, be anxious]"; 30:15, "In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength";<sup>28</sup> 50:10, "Who is among you that feareth Yahweh, that obeyeth the voice of His servant? Let him trust in the name of Yahweh, and rely upon his God." The very troubles and uncertainties on the eighth century international scene tended to force Isaiah's contemporaries to a deeper faith in God (26:16). Isaiah's sovereign, Hezekiah, thus became Israel's preeminent king of faith (II Kings 18:5), even as Josiah, in the next century, became her preeminent king of the Book (23:25).

In the later prophetic period, Jeremiah, from his "lone-wolf" existence as a man against the crowd,<sup>29</sup> came clearly to perceive the necessity for individualistic faith in God. He observed, negatively, that man cannot trust in himself (Jer. 10:23) or in other men (17:5). Positively then, man must give glory to Yahweh (13:16), trusting in Him (17:7) and glorying in the fact "that he hath understanding and knoweth Me" (9:23, 24). His own bitter experiences during the reigns of Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin (608-597 B.C.) cast Jeremiah even more unreservedly upon the faithfulness of his God. He could thus be used the more effectively as the mouthpiece of the Lord, joyfully to proclaim, "Ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart" (29:13). The reason for the rejection of the Samaritans was that during these years they tried to "fear" Yahweh and yet at the same time serve their own idols (II Kings 17:33, 41); and men simply cannot do both!

Perhaps the most famous single Biblical expression of faith came through Jeremiah's contemporary, Habakkuk. This man of God spoke of the pride of Babylon, the empire which was then rising to dominance, but also of that power by which the Babylonians, or any other force, could be overcome: "Behold, his soul is puffed up, it is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith" (Hab. 2:4). The meaning of Habakkuk's "faith" is not that of the "stiff upper lip," of

<sup>27</sup>Cf. Raven, *op. cit.*, pp. 470-474: "No other Old Testament book contains such a large element of the gospel as Isaiah," p. 459.

<sup>28</sup>And see above, p. 302.

<sup>29</sup>See above, p. 230.



a man holding out, in his own "powerful" faithfulness, until the crisis be past.<sup>30</sup> Rather, as the contrast with Babylonian pride demonstrates, and as the subsequent context illustrates, this faith consists of a commitment to God, of one's faithful trusting in Him to accomplish what is, humanly-speaking, impossible (3:18, 19; cf. Rom. 1:17).

It is necessary, however, to ask in each case of faith that is found in the Old Testament, faith for what? Paul, in the epistle to the Romans, means faith for the Christian's justification from sin, while Habakkuk speaks simply of faith for his people's deliverance from the power of Babylon. Other examples of faith's more limited goals are Joel 2:13, 14, Judah's faith for recovery from a locust plague, and Jonah 3:9, 10, the Assyrians' faith for God's sparing of their city Nineveh (cf. Isa. 7:4). But Isaiah 1:18 preaches faith for the forgiveness of sins, just as does Romans 1:17; and Ezekiel in the exile stresses faith for a man's deliverance from the death that his transgressions would otherwise entail (Ezek. 18:30-32). The latter's contemporary, Daniel, went still further, teaching fidelity to God, even should one's life be forfeited. His three friends thus demonstrated their supreme faith to Nebuchadnezzar, by stating, "If our God whom we serve be able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, He will deliver us out of thy hand, oh king. But if not, be it known unto thee, oh king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up" (Dan. 3:17, 18).<sup>32</sup> Here is a faith that looks beyond life to heaven itself. The point of all these passages, though, is this: Whatever the faith that was described in any given context might have been *for*, it was a faith *in* Yahweh; and it is this commitment to Him that constitutes the condition of the testament. Such commitment was indeed expressed and demonstrated in moral and ceremonial obedience (see the following topics); but "behind all demands of morality, and behind all sacrificial custom, there is a personal relationship with God,"<sup>33</sup> namely, that of saving faith. The undated 130th Psalm may serve then as a final exhibition of this indispensable relationship.

<sup>30</sup>Though this has become liberalism's standard interpretation of the passage, cf. Lanchester's handbook, *The Books of Nehum, Habakkuk and Zephaniah* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1920), p. 77, which speaks of Paul's "reading into it his own theory of faith."  
<sup>31</sup>Cf. Raven, *op. cit.*, p. 465: "It is often difficult to determine whether there is any thought of salvation from sin as it occurs in certain connections, for example, Isa. 13:2, 3 . . . There are, however, a few passages in which the spiritual conception of salvation is certainly present. Such is Isa. 64:5, 6."  
<sup>32</sup>This marginal translation in the Revised Version is not only a more natural rendering of the Aramaic than that found in its text — "If it be so, our God is able, and He will" — it also brings out the faith of the three, even if they were not delivered. To adopt the former reading need cast no reflection on the power only to Himself.

<sup>33</sup>Snath, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, oh Yahweh.  
I wait for Yahweh, my soul doth wait,  
And in His word do I hope.

For with Yahweh there is *hesed* [faithfulness to the testament],  
And with Him is piteous redemption.  
And He will redeem Israel

From all his iniquities (vv. 1, 5, 7, 8).

#### For Further Reading:

Benjamin B. Warfield, *Biblical Doctrines*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1929. Chapter 13 consists of a significant study of the Biblical doctrine of faith.  
William D. Kerswell, *The Old Testament Doctrine of Salvation*. Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath-school Work, 1904. The study tends to give insufficient attention to the fulfillment of salvation in Christ, but it contains much on the Old Testament teaching concerning redemption.  
J. Cresham Machen, *What Is Faith?* New York: The Macmillan Co., 1935. A defence against Modernism of the Biblical concept of faith, in its various aspects.

## 25. Morals\*

Genuine conversion eventuates in sanctification. The reality of Israel's personal relationship with God, the sincerity, that is, of their faith, was demonstrated by the actualization of their personal obedience to Him (Ex. 15:25; Deut. 8:2).<sup>1</sup> Faith without works is dead (James 2:17; cf. Deut. 13:3, 4), as truly in the Old Testament as in the New. The Sinaitic testament makes it clear that if, and only if, the Israelites obeyed God's voice would He be their God (Ex. 19:5). Indeed, "in every important affair of life the Israelite has to accomplish something which God demands."<sup>2</sup> On the one hand, God revealed certain demands, the execution of which served as acted symbols of the redemption that He was yet to accomplish. Herein arises "ceremonial obedience" (topics 26-28 that follow). But on the other hand, and without "claiming a difference of dignity,"<sup>3</sup> one seems justified in stating that God's ethical demands, His demands for "moral obedience" (this topic), constituted the more fundamental means for a man's demonstration of the validity of his faith (cf. Acts 10:35). The ceremonies in many cases were, in fact, added to

\* BIBLE READING: Amos 5; Exodus 20

*Colateral Reading:* Vos, *Biblical Theology*, pp. 64-68, 102-103, 141-150.  
Oehler, *Theology of the Old Testament*, pp. 182-191, 451-455.

<sup>1</sup>See above, pp. 90, 91, 297.

<sup>2</sup>Oehler, *Theology of the Old Testament*, p. 182.  
<sup>3</sup>*Loc. cit.*